

What is claimed is:

1. A crank shaft power takeoff system, comprising:  
  
an appliance intended for use in connection with lawns and/or gardens, said appliance comprising an engine that includes a crank shaft;  
  
an accessory used in conjunction with the appliance; and  
  
a transmission for utilizing the crank shaft of the appliance engine to operate the accessory.
2. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 1, wherein the appliance is a lawn mower.
3. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 1, wherein the accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.
4. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 1, wherein the appliance is a lawn mower and the accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.
5. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 1, wherein the transmission comprises:  
  
a plurality of pulleys;  
  
at least one belt carried on two of the pulleys;  
  
wherein tension on the belt may be manipulated to activate or deactivate the accessory, as desired.
6. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 1, wherein the transmission comprises:  
  
a first pulley housing;  
  
a second pulley housing pivotally connected to the first pulley housing;

a belt oriented within the first and second pulley housings;

an engagement assembly for pivoting the second pulley housing relative to the first pulley housing to selectably tighten or loosen the belt, thereby activating or deactivating the accessory, respectively, as desired.

7. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 6, wherein the engagement assembly comprises:

an engagement lever oriented for manipulation by an operator of the appliance;

an engagement plate fixedly secured to the engagement lever, the engagement plate being oriented in the first pulley housing;

a receiving rod secured to the second pulley housing;

an engagement rod connecting the engagement plate to the receiving rod;

wherein movement of the engagement lever into an engaged position by the operator of the appliance pivots the second pulley housing relative to the first pulley housing, thereby tightening the belt and engaging the system.

8. A crank shaft power takeoff system, comprising:

an appliance intended for use in connection with lawns and/or gardens, said appliance comprising an engine that includes a crank shaft;

an accessory used in conjunction with the appliance; and

a transmission for utilizing the crank shaft of the appliance engine to operate the accessory, said transmission comprising:

a plurality of pulleys;

at least one belt carried on two of the pulleys;

wherein tension on the belt may be manipulated to activate or deactivate the accessory, as desired.

9. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 8, wherein the appliance is a lawn mower.

10. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 8, wherein the accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.

11. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 8, wherein the appliance is a lawn mower and the accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.

12. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 8, wherein the transmission comprises:

- a first pulley housing;

- a second pulley housing pivotally connected to the first pulley housing;

- a belt oriented within the first and second pulley housings;

- an engagement assembly for pivoting the second pulley housing relative to the first pulley housing to selectably tighten or loosen the belt, thereby activating or deactivating the accessory, respectively, as desired.

13. A crank shaft power takeoff system according to claim 12, wherein the engagement assembly comprises:

- an engagement lever oriented for manipulation by an operator of the appliance;

- an engagement plate fixedly secured to the engagement lever, the engagement plate being oriented in the first pulley housing;

- a receiving rod secured to the second pulley housing;

- an engagement rod connecting the engagement plate to the receiving rod; and

wherein movement of the engagement lever into an engaged position by the operator of the appliance pivots the second pulley housing relative to the first pulley housing, thereby tightening the belt and engaging the system.

14. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft, said method comprising the steps of:

providing an appliance intended for use in connection with lawns and/or gardens, the appliance comprising an engine that includes a crank shaft;

providing an accessory used in conjunction with the appliance;

utilizing motion of the crank shaft to activate the accessory.

15. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 14, wherein said appliance is a lawn mower.

16. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 14, wherein said accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.

17. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 14, wherein said appliance is a lawn mower and said accessory is a blower/vacuum assembly.

18. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 14, wherein said crank shaft utilizing step comprises the steps of:

providing a transmission comprising a plurality of pulleys and at least one belt carried by two of the pulleys; and

tightening the belt to activate the accessory.

19. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 14, wherein said crank shaft utilizing step comprises the steps of:

providing:

a first pulley housing;

a second pulley housing pivotally connected to the first pulley housing;

a belt oriented within the first and second pulley housings;

an engagement assembly; and

utilizing the engagement assembly to pivot the second pulley housing relative to the first pulley housing to tighten the belt, thereby activating the accessory.

20. A method for utilizing motion of a crank shaft according to claim 19, wherein:

said engagement assembly comprises:

an engagement lever oriented for manipulation by an operator of the appliance;

an engagement plate fixedly secured to the engagement lever, the engagement plate being oriented in the first pulley housing;

a receiving rod secured to the second pulley housing;

an engagement rod connecting the engagement plate to the receiving rod; and

said engagement assembly utilizing step is performed by moving the engagement lever into an engaged position.